National Black Monitor INC.

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NATIONAL Black Monitor

April 1974

Reaching the people who are concerned about the issues . . .

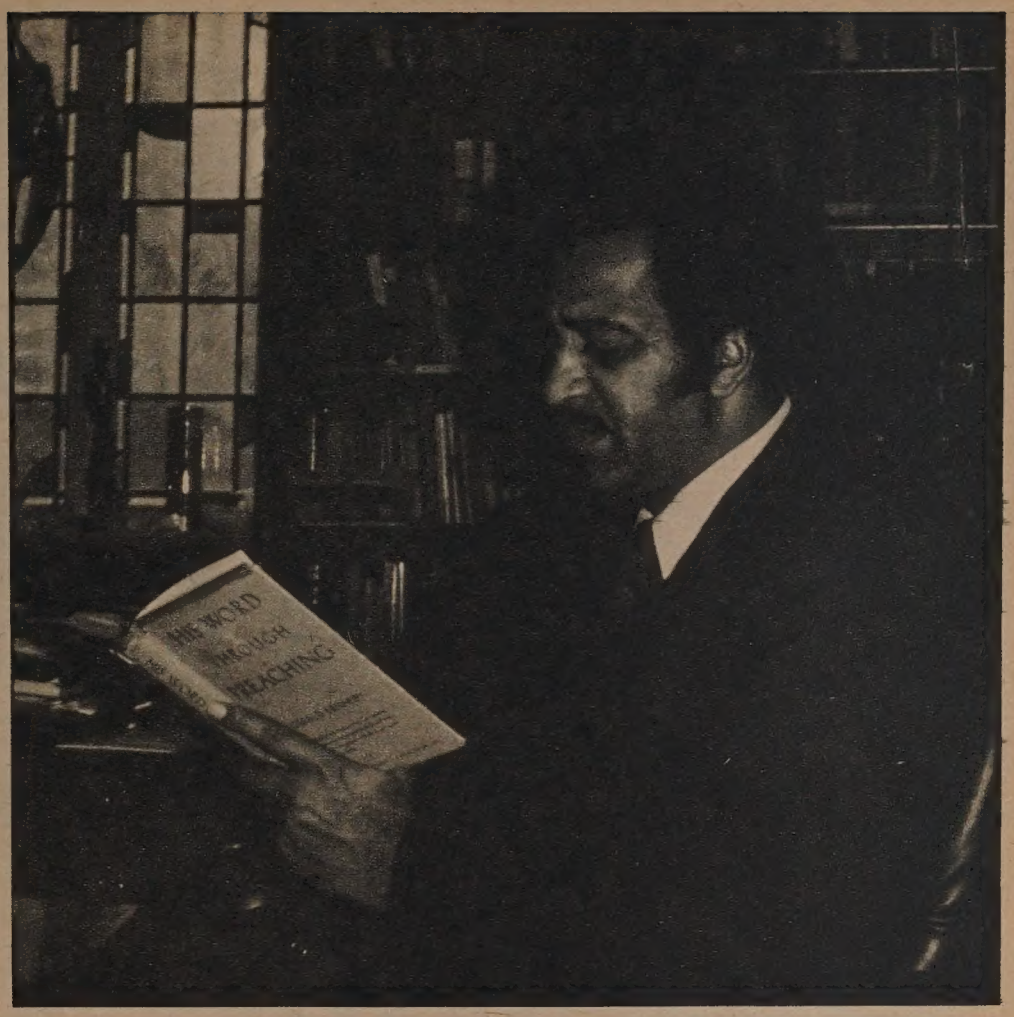
VOLUME 2, No. 1, 1974

Contents:

Introduction of our national publisher, a member of our editorial advisory board and a new series dealing with the growth and survival of America.

This helpful addition to your paper is brought to you as a courtesy of your publisher who wants all its readers well informed. Comments, suggestions or questions would be appreciated by your local publisher who contributes to the editorial content of The National BLACK MONITOR. This person, in turn, will give advice to the national publisher on your behalf.

Published by the National BLACK MONITOR, Inc. on behalf of newspapers in over 70 major markets. Mrs. Ophelia DeVore Mitchell is National Publisher. National offices are at Suite 1004, 507 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017 + (212) 682-8188 or 867-0983.



Dr. William A. Jones seeking knowledge

EDITORIAL:

The National BLACK MONITOR is a medium that deals solely with issues that are vital to the survival of Black America. For, we at the National BLACK MONITOR believe that if we in this generation cannot learn to grow and survive together in harmony and peace, our entire universe might well be doomed for future mankind.

One thing that all intelligent persons in America must have learned from our recent Watergate is that history tends to repeat itself only when we are not alert to the simple indicators around us. Had it not been for the simple vigilance of a young and alert black guard ... and the simple honesty of what was considered a "mediocre" judge, our entire nation might have been living under a police state — a dictatorship. Had it not been for the "simple" persistence of the victimized at Kent State, justice might never have been achieved. Thus, the National BLACK MONITOR will focus on what might be considered "simple" or small miscarriages of justice ... those things which often result in discontent, followed by frustration and then chaos.

As a means of avoiding these costly pitfalls, our national publisher and our editorial advisory board believe the best answer resides in an intelligent and-or informed people who are guided today from lessons learned about yesterday. With this kind of learning in mind, the National BLACK MONITOR will be presenting to its readers for the rest of this year — beginning next month — many facts about two specific periods of our history. We call these periods the First Reconstruction Era — a period running from 1854 to 1883, and the Second Reconstruction Era — another period running from 1954 to approximately 1983.

Parellels or comparisons will be drawn so we can learn much and be guided more effectively in our actions today. Students and others may want to save this series along with other informative articles. Thus, hole-punch guides for maintaining in a standard 3-ring notebook are provided in the margin.

Our national publisher is Ms. Ophelia DeVore (Mitchell). In February of this year, she received a well-deserved Doctorate of Humane Letters from Allen University. The citation read:

Dr. Benjamin Glover, President of Allen University, Confers Doctorate of Humane Letters On Ophelia DeVore (Mitchell).

"Few persons have struggled more and meant more to the struggle for black dignity, black pride and the development of black businesses than has Ophelia DeVore (Mitchell). Certainly no single person has motivated more black Americans to move forward to top positions in various fields than has this courageous lady through the Ophelia DeVore Charm School which she established over 28 years ago at age 16.

"Today, Miss DeVore has many and varied business interests including board chairman of Ophelia DeVore Cosmetics, owner-publisher of The Columbus Times (a daily newspaper) and publisher of The National BLACK MONITOR

"What we consider more important, however, about this busy mother of 5 children is her untiring and widespread efforts in the field of human rights ... her unusual strength of character, her impeccable integrity, her undaunted determination in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds and her deep devotion to the needs of all of our oppressed black brothers and sisters."

Our national editorial advisory board is comprised of the distinguished publisher of this paper in your city, along with other outstanding and thoughtful black leaders. One such advisory board member of great depth and intellect is the Reverend Doctor William Augustus Jones, Jr. pastor of the historic Bethany Baptist Church in Brooklyn, N.Y. and the charismatic leader of SCLC-Operation Breadbasket of Greater New York City who probably opened more doors in that area for black Americans than anyone since the late Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Future issues of The National BLACK MONITOR will reflect his great wisdom.

"'Reconstruction' ---Yesterday and Today"

One hundred twenty years ago, Frederick Douglass, the great black orator and leader, said in a speech that " ... The ground which a colored man occupies in this country is, every inch of it, sternly disputed ..." Can anyone deny that this is still true today? Have we ... can we learn anything from the past? The National BLACK MONITOR thinks so. Thus, our theme for 1974 -- "Reconstruction - Yesterday and Today."

Our purpose is to examine the First Reconstruction Era, which we consider began with the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 and ended in 1883. This was the year the Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional. We will then compare these years with the Second Reconstruction Era which we at the MONITOR consider the years beginning with the Supreme Court decision on school desegregation in 1954 and may run to the early 1980's.

In doing this, we hope to provide our readers with ideas and information that will aid them in dealing seriously with the present and future struggle for black survival, black liberation and black self-development ... for, we at the National BLACK MONITOR ask, "How can America survive and grow to the richness of its potential if all people in America are not free, productive and treated with fair play?"

This approach is in keeping with our on-going aim to monitor the actions of all in regard to black Americans -- past and present. This will enable us to provide information to protect ourselves and all others in America from further repressive action by many in the larger community. Additionally, it will help us to assure our freedom, to be productive in an unfettered way, and to be treated fairly (or equitably) in light of our unique historic situation in America.

(Continued on Page 6)

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"'Reconstruction' ---Yesterday and Today"

(Continued from Page 4)

What do we mean by the word "Reconstruction?" Webster's Dictionary defines this historical word as "the reorganization and re-establishment of the seceeded states in the Union after the Civil War." A general history book conception of the word is that it's "the term used regarding acts passed by Congress which provided for the military rule of the South pending the reorganization (reconstruction) of the government of the Confederacy into a form that would be loyal to the United States." Black historian-philospher-leader Dr. W.E.B. DuBois wrote a book called, "Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880." He described it as "an essay toward a history of the past which black folks played in the attempt to reconstruct democracy in America.

(It is imperative to note that all three definitions dealt with what were considered the needs of America in relation to the situation of black citizens in America. It is also interesting to note that these two "Reconstruction" periods were either accidentally or providentially just 100 years apart. Thus, our actions today can determine whether or not we act wisely enough -- and with the needed guidance from above -- to make these 100 years God-directed ones, for the good of all in this nation.)

The National BLACK MONITOR, in an attempt to provide useful historical information to its readers, encompass all three of the above concepts about what is "Reconstruction." We call it -- **the reorganization of white-dominated insitutions for the admission of black Americans as full citizens and the psychological reorganization of the black mind regarding the effective use of its newly-emerging status.**

Examples of the first aspect of this definition during the First Reconstruction Era were the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments of the Constitution. Examples of this reorganization of white-dominated institutions during the Second Reconstruction Era were the Supreme Court desegreation decision and the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 1965 and 1968. In both cases, the laws were designed to force white-dominated institutions to deal with black Americans as respected citizens of the U.S. -- something that too many of them still fail to do so that all our citizens can contribute effectively to America.

As for the second aspect of our definition (the part about the psychological reorganization of the black mind regarding its newly-emerging status), we content that this is crucial. An example is that it is not good to black citizens as a group if the positions in the white-dominated institutions, which have been newly-won by the struggle, are filled by black American who show no sensitivity or responsibility to their own people who opened these doors. These black people make themselves easily recognizable because they are the types who sit behind their big desks, often with a white secretary beside them, rapping about how "Being black had nothing to do with my getting this job." I got here because of merit."

No one would ever want to deny that these people have merit, even if they are pitifully short on race pride. However, black people have had "merit" for centuries and still never were able to obtain these jobs until there was a struggle by all kinds of black people and other concerned Americans. What is even worse, these kinds of people with black skin may not consciously be aware of the damage they are doing to the continuing struggle from which they are direct beneficiaries. They also would appear to be conveniently and effectively ignoring all of the black Americans and others who marched, sat in, picketed, boycotted, fought and died to open up the doors of those white-dominated insitutions. Also, they are deceiving the white people who hired them in the first place because they wanted and sought specifically a competent "black" person in that position.

These people are victims -- sad to say -- of a system that was built on many inconsistencies. Thus, in effect, these people are cast by cultural circumstance in the mold of destructive and parisitic types, who have moved ahead mainly because of the efforts of others.

That there unwitting and perhaps naive counterparts have been around a long time is evidenced by a statement made by Frederick Douglass in the 1850's. Speaking to a predominantly white audience, the great orator said: " ... But whatever character or capacity you ascribe to us, I am not ashamed to be numbered with this race (ie, the black race). I am not ashamed to speak here as a Negro. Sir, I utterly abhor and spurn with all the contempt possible that cowardly meanness -- I will not call it pride -- which leads any colored man to repudiate his race. I cannot say, therefore, as was said recently by a distinguished colored man at a convention in Cincinnati, that he did not speak as a colored man,' for, Sir, as a colored man I do speak; as a colored man I was invited here to speak; and as a colored man there are peculiar reaons for my speaking."

Our worst kind of history in this Second Reconstruction Era can repeat itself if we are not vigilant. Far too many of our people who have benefitted primarily because of the struggles of others are historical descendants of that "distinguished colored man." They are still alive and kicking today, some 120 years later.

This National BLACK MONITOR series will be examining why so many of our people have become "victims" of a deceptive history. A lesson to be learned from this, as an example, is that the struggle for human decency has had its black-victimized-minds within our midst during the First Reconstruction Era -- and we still have them today. Our efforts must be toward recognizing them and helping them so they won't feel they have to continue as they were in the past and are today. This is one of the reasons why we feel that comparing the two periods in history is so important.

Another reason for comparing these periods in American history is that there were times when - similar to now -- actions were being taken to give us more rights and simultaneous actions were taking place to strip of us them. This happened during the First Reconstruction Era and, by 1883 -- with the Supreme Court decision to nullify the rights of black Americans to free access to public accommodation -- these efforts to devise some new form of enslavement had been successful.

Today, if the Supreme Court rules in favor of DeFunis in his attack on the compensatory guidelines of the law school of the University of Washington to overcome past discrimination against black Americans, we may be on the road again to a new kind of enslavement in this Second Reconstruction Era.

All around us, we see descendants of those same "good" white citizens saying that "Black Americans have been given too much. It's time to stop doing all these things for them, etc." Accordingly, we hope that the information we provide on the similarities of the two periods in our forthcoming issues will help black Americans and other concerned Americans to make sure that, in this Second Reconstruction Era, history does not repeat itself. We must make certain that no one be allowed to water down or limit the meager gains made during the 1950's toward self development within our race. Rather, it is our intention to monitor the actions of all regarding black Americans -- past and present -- so that finally everyone in America will have all the resources necessary to be fully self-supporting and "free at last."

We want to assure our readers that, though we will be dealing throughout the rest of this year with various aspects of "Reconstruction -- Yesterday and Today", our regular features on beauty fashion, food, the black church, etc. will continue. Finally, we owe much thanks to Chevrolet, Clariol and National Distillers who helped so much to make this new series possible.

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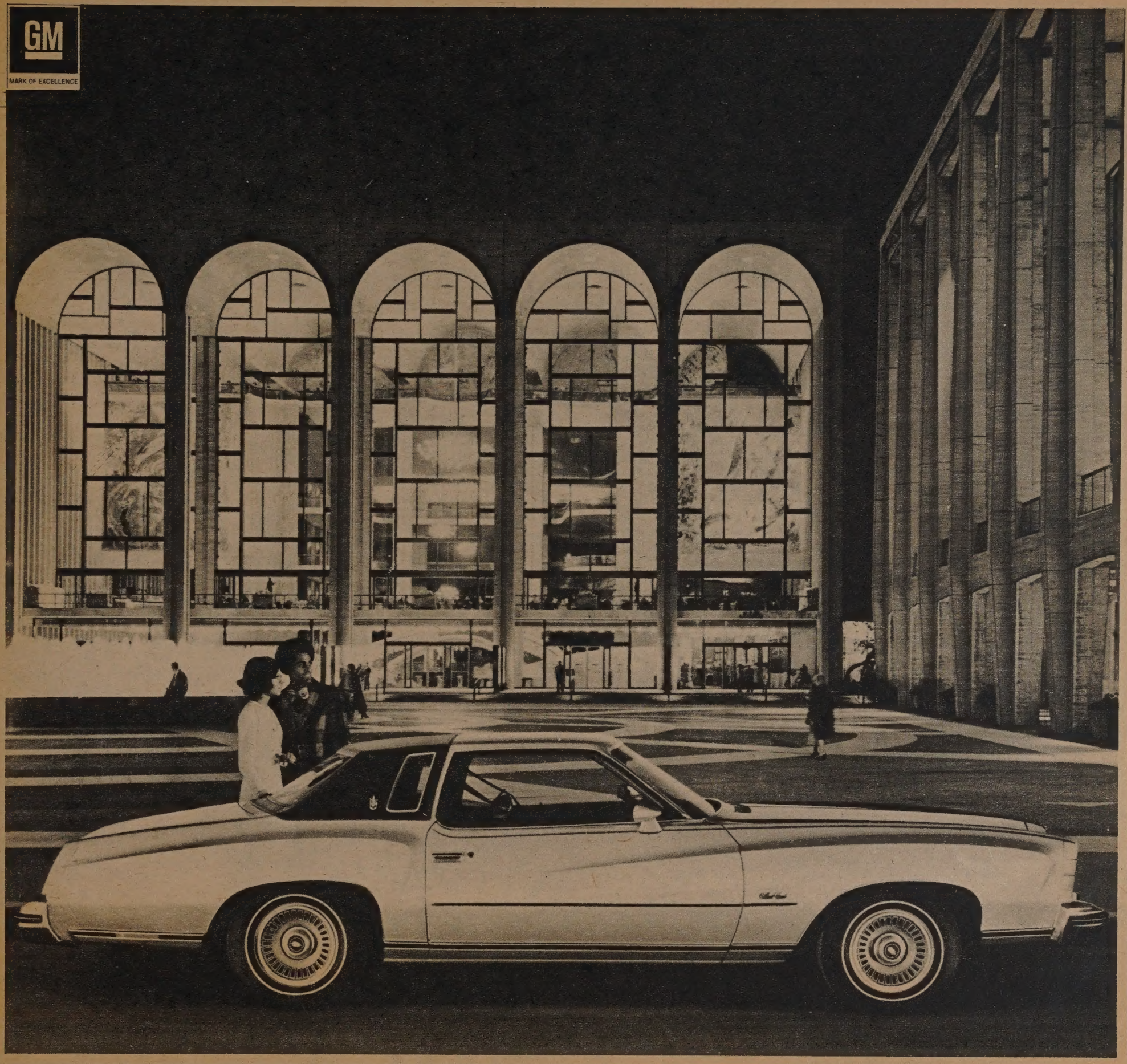

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